Summer 2005

Pacific Islands Fishery News

Newsletter of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Summer 2005

FISHERMEN PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE TUNA FISHERIES

On July 25-29, 2005, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and the Tokyo-based Organization for Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) co-hosted the joint International Conference on Responsible Tuna Fisheries and Third International Fishers Forum (IFF3), in Yokohama, Japan. The event brought together more than 80 longline, purse-seine, artisanal and other fishermen and approximately 170 researchers, government officials and non-government organization representatives from 26 countries in North and South America, Asia and the Pacific islands.

The event's highlight was the adoption of a "Declaration on Responsible Fisheries" that outlines a 12-point plan for ensuring the sustainability of the world's tuna resources.

"We are pleased with the document that was prepared by the fishers in the Pacific and the commitments made therein to address sustainable fishing, bycatch and overcapacity," noted Rebecca Lent, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service Office of International Affairs.

The key points to which the fishermen committed are as follows:

- To facilitate rules to manage tuna fishing capacity based on the principle that any introduction of new fishing capacity should be accompanied with the removal of equivalent capacity;
- To promote cooperation in realizing sustainable use of tuna resources by encouraging all purse-seiners to participate in the World Tuna Purse Seine Organization;
- To improve techniques for using fish aggregation devices with the aim of reducing the impact of purse-seine operations on bigeye tuna, especially juveniles;
- To refrain from reflagging vessels in order to circumvent conservation and management measures;
- To support the Joint Meeting of Tuna Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) to be held in Japan in early 2007;
- To ensure the conservation and management of shark stocks;
- To reduce incidental catches of sea turtles and seabirds;
- To promote proven techniques for reducing sea turtle incidental catches and improving the survival rates of sea turtles that are caught and released;
- To promote proven techniques for reducing seabird incidental catches;
- To promote responsible tuna fishing, trade, marketing and consumption;
- To reaffirm that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and RFMOs have primary responsibility for addressing international tuna issues; and
- To challenge biased and unscientific accusations that attack environmentally responsible tuna fisheries.

At the event, the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) was presented the Jade Sea Turtle Award for being "a shining example to other fishers on reducing sea turtle interactions." While accounting for only 2 percent of the longline effort in the Pacific, the Hawaii longline fleet has had to deal with the Pacific-wide impact of all fisheries on turtles as well as land-based impacts on turtles on their nesting beaches. HLA fishermen were restricted in their ability to shallow set for swordfish for more than three years and completely forbidden to shallow set for one year. After losing tens of millions of dollars, the fishery reopened in late 2004 with strict regulations on hook and bait types, gear configuration and set times (hours of darkness only); a 50 percent reduction in its allowable annual swordfish sets (2,120 total sets); hard caps on incidental turtle interactions (17 loggerheads and 16 leatherback turtles annually); 100 percent observer coverage; and requirements to carry approved devices to release caught sea turtles. Under these stringent conditions, the reopened fishery has experienced very good catch rates of swordfish while reaching only about half of the hard caps on incidental turtle interactions. The new requirements, particularly the night-setting requirement, have also reduced seabird interactions to approximately 2 percent of their previous levels.

The Forum awarded its second Golden Albatross Award to the Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association (NIKKATSU-REN) for developing the tori pole. This gear reduces longline interactions with seabirds and has proven so effective it is now used on vessels worldwide.

Certificates of recognition for turtle conservation work in Ecuador were awarded to Guillermo Moran and the Asociacion de Exportadores de Pesca Blanca (ASOEXPEBLA) and to Luis Torres and Programa Nacional de Observadores Pesqueros del Ecuador (PROBECUADOR).

Yokohama conference hosts and sponsors: (l-r) Yuichiro Harada, Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries; Akira Nakamae, Fisheries Agency of Japan; Isao Nakasu, Japan Fisheries Association; Rebecca Lent, National Marine Fisheries Service; and Kitty M. Simonds, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

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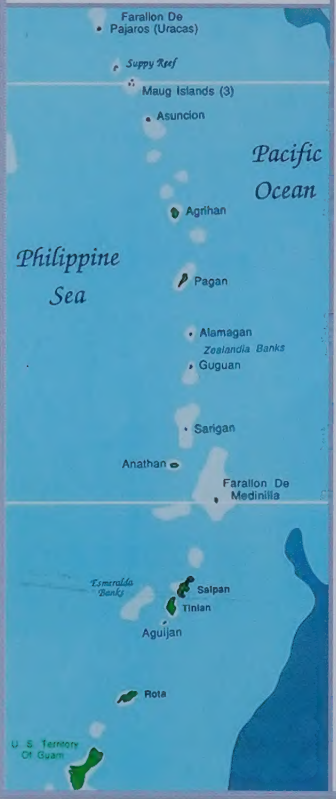
The Alamagan Project fishing boat (left) and transport boat (right) with generators being airlifted to land by helicopter.



ALAMAGAN REMOTE FISHING STATION PROJECT LANDS FIRST HARVEST

The long anticipated inaugural fishing trip for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Remote Fishing Station Project in Alamagan took place on July 29, 2005. The project aims to establish a fishing base on one of the few islands north of Saipan that is inhabited year-round. The project has strong support from the Northern Islands Mayor's Office (NIMO), which has been working to assist approximately 300 displaced residents of the Northern Islands who wish to return and resettle on the islands of Alamagan, Pagan and Agrigan. The indigenous CNMI-born Chamorros and Refalawash (Carolinians living in the Northern Marianas) were removed from the islands in the 1980s due to volcanic eruptions and most recently in May 2003 when the volcano on Anatahan erupted.

With financial assistance from the Mayor's Office, three generators were transported by boat to Alamagan, situated 164 miles north of Saipan, and then airlifted by helicopter to land. The generators will be used to run freezers to store fish until they are transported to market.

On August 6, the fishermen participating in the project landed their first catch of reef and bottom fish as well as some yellowfin tuna caught while trolling. As part of the project's requirements, the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) collected information on the catch. This was the first time since 2003 that catch information from the northern islands has been gathered.

As part of the project's conservation efforts, the DFW conducted training on fish spawning for NIMO staff. The training was initiated by Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council contractor Paul Bartram and conducted by Mike Trianni of DFW. It enabled NIMO staff to determine when a particular fish should be caught based on spawning season.

The Alamagan Project is funded through the Community Demonstration Project Program of the Western Pacific Region. For more information, contact Charles Kaaiai at charles.kaaiai@noaa.gov.

Left: (l-r) Northern Islands Mayor's Office staff members Lerins Stoll, Emilio Ayuyu and Jack Igisomar measure and weigh fish. *Right:* Paul Santos of the Northern Islands Mayor's Office opens a mafuti (emperor) to examine gonads and assess reproductive status.

The Alamagan Project participants with the safely landed generators.

FISHERS FORUM FOCUSES ON FISH TAGGING & DATA COLLECTION

In conjunction with the 127th meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, a Fishers Forum on fish tagging programs and data collection needs to address overfishing of both Pacific bigeye tuna and main Hawaiian Island bottomfish was held at the Ala Moana Hotel's Garden Lanai in Honolulu, June 1, 2005, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Guest speakers summarized the programs run by the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (Clay Tam, Annette Tagawa and Tom Iwai), the Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research (Carl Meyer), the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (Kim Holland), the National Marine Fisheries Service (Evan Howell), the Kewalo Keiki Fishing Club and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Mark Mitsuyasu).

Kim Higa (center), owner of Aku Bone restaurant in Kakaako, won the drawing at the Fishers Forum for the John Dominis gift certificate provided by Cox Radio. Also pictured are Roy Morioka (left), then Council chair, and Wade Faildo of Cox Radio.

The Forum also addressed the overfishing of bottomfish that is occurring around the main Hawaiian Islands and of bigeye tuna that is occurring throughout the Pacific. Public comment was sought on management options to address these issues.

Council Addresses Overfishing of Bigeye Tuna, Tightens Black Coral Harvests

At its 127th Council meeting, May 31 to June 2, 2005, in Honolulu, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council finalized its management recommendations to address overfishing of Pacific bigeye tuna and voted to place tighter restrictions on the harvest of black coral.

While the catch of bigeye tuna by the fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Council accounts for less than 2 percent of the harvest of bigeye tuna in the Pacific, US law requires that the Council take action if overfishing of a species is occurring in its fisheries.

The Council's recommendation, which will be transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for review and approval, includes a suite of domestic and international measures.

Among the domestic measures, the Council recommends that all commercial boats that fish for pelagic species (i.e., open-water species as opposed to bottomfish) in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore) surrounding Hawaii be required to have federal permits and report their catches through federal logbooks. There has long been concern that fishing by these vessels around offshore fish aggregation devices (FADs) and weather buoys and at Cross Seamount off of the Big Island of Hawaii account for a substantial take of bigeye tuna. The reporting requirements will provide detailed data on the amount of the harvest of not only bigeye but other species as well.

"This reporting is especially critical now as management decisions for migratory species, such as tunas, are being made by international fishery management organizations," noted Council Executive Director Kitty M. Simonds. "These organizations often are relying on country- or fleet-specific quotas based on historical catches, so knowing the amount of the catches for our fisheries is very important."

For example, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) decided that the 2004 catches of bigeye tuna in the Eastern Pacific by longline vessels should be capped at the 2001 catches by country. These catches were approximately 37,000 mt for Japan; 13,000 mt for Korea; 8,000 mt for Taiwan; 3,000 mt for China; 150 mt for the United States; and 4,000 mt for other fleets.

The Council also took initial action to place stricter restrictions on black coral harvesting in federal waters (beyond 3 miles) around Hawaii. Black coral, the official State gem of Hawaii, brings about $25 million to the State annually. Hawaii black coral is a highly prized precious coral, much superior to black coral imported from the Philippines and elsewhere.

The four commercial divers actively harvesting deepwater black corals in Hawaii are the only such fishermen in the United States. They operate in the Auau Channel, which separates the islands of Maui and Lanai. The harvestable corals are found at 150 to 250 feet, allowing the divers about 20 minutes of dive time, followed by 1 1/2 hours of decompression time. The fishermen face multiple risks, including decompression sickness (i.e., the bends) and shark attacks.

Outgoing Chair Roy Morioka of Hawaii (far right) turns over the gavel to incoming Chair Frank McCoy of American Samoa. Also pictured is Sean Martin (far left) who will be taking over the Hawaii vice chair position held by departing Council Member Frank Farm (2nd from left).

The Council voted to restrict the harvest of black coral to a minimum size of 48 inches in height or 1-inch in base diameter. This decision would remove an exemption that allowed fishermen who reported harvests of black corals between April 17, 1997, and April 17, 2002, to harvest black coral trees with minimum sizes of 36 inches or 3/4-inch base diameter, which is the current size limit imposed by the State of Hawaii.

University of Hawaii professor Rick Grigg, who has headed the Council's Precious Coral Plan Team for 28 years, said the increase in minimum size would protect the corals for an additional five years of sexual maturity, allowing more recruitment to take place. While black coral biomass appears to be more abundant than ever, there also appears to be a decline in the larger, more mature trees and in the young recruits. The decline could be due to the invasive species *Carijoa riisei* (snowflake coral), an opportunistic species that grows on the black coral and kills it.

During the three-day meeting, the Council also heard reports on the Hawaii swordfish fishery, which was reopened with strict management measures in late 2004 after being closed for several years due to concerns regarding the bycatch of sea turtles. From January 1 to May 28, 2005, the fishery landed 1.7 million pounds of swordfish worth $4.8 million in ex-vessel value.

The Hawaii and American Samoa longline fisheries are the only US longline fisheries for tuna in the Pacific. Both are now limited entry fisheries, with the final rule for the American Samoa fishery published in the Federal Register on May 24, 2005.

At the close of the meeting, the Council bade farewell to Council Chair Roy Morioka and Vice Chair Frank Farm, both of Hawaii. In August 2005, each completed the maximum allowable terms (i.e., three three-year terms) as Council members. During their tenures the Council led the development of longline management measures to protect seabirds, turtles and other protected species.

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Executive Director
Kitty M. Simonds

Five Community Fishery Projects Identified for Funding

Five community fishery projects have been identified to receive a total of $574,152 federal funding. Funding is to come from the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Projects Program (CDPP), established by Congress to provide indigenous communities in the US Pacific islands with greater access to their fishery resources. Twenty-seven proposals were submitted for consideration. The selected proposals are as follows:

- Traditional Fishing Practices for Chamorros and Carolinians (CNMI) proposes to restore traditional *hachuman* (mackerel scad) fishing in Rota, including the arts and crafts necessary to manufacture traditional canoes, fishing gear and equipment; utilize traditional fishing methods to increase the supply of fish for the community; and create an opportunity for the younger generation to learn traditional skills and the respectful use of fish resources.
- Waianae Aku Boat Project (Hawaii) seeks to train 40 Native Hawaiians to fish for *aku* (skipjack tuna) using traditional pole-and-line fishing techniques.
- Heeia Fishpond Revitalization Project (Hawaii) proposes to do feasibility studies in fishery and fishery-related activities and demonstrate how the use of traditional and cultural fishing practices within a fishpond context contributes to the efficient use of marine resources.
- Multi-purpose Community Vessel to Improve Management and Safety of the Bottomfish Fishery (Guam) proposes to acquire a vessel to conduct cooperative fisherman-scientist research to establish a baseline for management of bottomfish fishing at offshore banks around Guam; to support transformation from species-oriented to ecosystem-based fishery management; to improve assessment of the bottomfish stock; to increase safety for community members fishing the offshore banks; and to monitor the offshore banks to deter illegal anchoring and fishing by foreign vessels.
- Small-Scale Longline Fishery Development for Olosega, Manua Islands (American Samoa), aims to create an opportunity for the village (population 380) to participate in a small-scale longline fishery operation.

NOAA has approved four of the five projects for funding.

Boat Secured for Guam's Longline Demonstration Project

The Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (GFCA) received funding from the Community Demonstration Projects Program for a longline demonstration project for the fishing community of Guam. After months of searching for a suitable vessel, project managers purchased the *Lady Katherine*, a 60-foot longline vessel, which had been idle in one of Guam's marinas.

Members of the GFCA and other members from the local fishing community have been spending many hours refurbishing the vessel.

Fishermen prepare the *Lady Katherine* for use as longline demonstration vessel.

Micronesian Governors Discuss the Environment and Other Concerns

The 4th Western Micronesian Chief Executives Summit, sponsored by the Office of the Governor of Guam, convened at the Guam Marriott Resort on April 19–22, 2005. The annual meeting brought together Gov. Felix Camacho of Guam, Gov. Robert Ruecho of Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, and President Tommy Remengesau Jr. of the Republic of Palau. Gov. Juan Babauta of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was unable to attend.

This year's sessions focused on a regional recycling initiative, invasive species, renewable energy, coral reef protection, international ship and port facility security code and the Maritime Transportation Act.

Exhibitors at the Summit included the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, The Nature Conservancy, the Guam Coastal Management Program and the Guam Division of Aquatics and Wildlife Resources.

Council banner at the Ocean Fest held in American Samoa in May 2005.

Council On-Site Coordinator Fini Aitaoto delivers a presentation at a community fisheries workshop in March 2005.

American Samoa Hosts Series of Fisheries Events

NOAA officials participated in the traditional Samoan *ava* ceremony at the opening of the May 2005 Ocean Symposium.

In March 2005, about 30 to 40 people (including village mayors, local fishermen, Council of Chiefs representatives and the general public) attended a series of community fisheries workshops held in American Samoa. Presentations were provided by the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program and the Samoa Fisheries and Environmental agencies, as well as from the sponsoring agencies, including the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR), the Joint Institute of Marine and Atmospheric Research, NOAA and the non-government organization Le Tausagi. The presentation on marine protected areas (MPAs) developed by the sponsors was delivered in Samoan by Fini Aitaoto, the American Samoa on-site coordinator for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. During his introduction, Aitaoto summarized the Council's mandated duties, MPA policy, Community Demonstration Projects Program and assistance to DMWR programs.

In May 2005, several schools and organizations participated in an Ocean Fest, which featured a variety of programs, various performances by youth and church organizations, *oka* (a traditional raw fish dish) and educational contests. The Council's booth offered an assortment of educational and outreach materials that were quickly seized by students, science teachers and others.

Also in May, American Samoa hosted an Ocean Symposium. The event began with a traditional Samoan *ava* ceremony. Council Member Ray Tulafono made a presentation that included information about the Council. Aitaoto assisted the Governor's Ocean Resources Management Council's Territorial and High Seas Advisory Group in preparing the presentation.

Hawaii Longline Fishermen Help Rid Ocean of Derelict Nets

Derelict nets have been involved in the deaths of Northwestern Hawaiian Islands sea turtles and monk seals and the scouring of coral reefs. These nets originate from trawling fisheries in the North Pacific as well as from cargo transport vessels plying the Pacific. The Hawaii-based longline fleet encounters these nets when traveling to and from the fishing grounds and when fishing in areas where currents converge. The derelict nets foul props and tangle in fishing gear, creating significant safety risks to crew members who must get in the water to un-foul the prop and lost time to boat owners. Over the years, many Hawaii-based longline vessels have brought large nets back to port so they would not encounter them again at sea, thus providing an environmental service at their own expense. Typically these nets and other debris are disposed of in trash receptacles bound for Oahu's overburdened landfill.

To alleviate this problem, several project partners have initiated a port reception and disposal program at Honolulu Harbor's Pier 38. The nets brought to the harbor will be collected in a special bin located behind United Fishing Agency and Pacific Ocean Producers. The nets will then be taken to the H-Power Facility to be burned to produce energy.

Project partners include Hawaii Longline Association; Hawaii Metal Recycling Inc.; NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Regional Office; the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council; State of Hawaii Department of Transportation, Harbors Division; City and County of Honolulu, H-Power Facility; Matson Navigation Inc.; and Hawaii Sea Grant. For more information, contact Eric Kingma at the Council, phone (808) 522-7497.

Derelict nets collected at sea by a Hawaii longline vessel are offloaded at Pier 38 in Honolulu.

Pacific Ocean Producers co-owner Jim Cook explains longline gear to teachers aboard the F/V *Gail Ann*.

Efforts Made to Promote Education on Sustainable Fisheries

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council continues its efforts to educate the public about sustainable fisheries. Recent efforts have involved educators at the state, national and international levels.

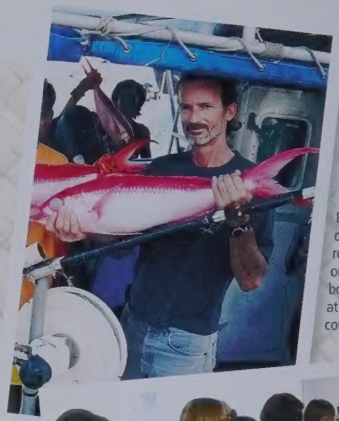
At the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) conference, held July 11-16, 2005, on Maui, the Council exhibited a display on Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) fisheries and handed out informational material, including a recently produced 12-minute video focusing on the scientific research and management of the NWHI fisheries. The video, along with an earlier produced 19-minute video on the history of the NWHI fisheries, was shown at a concurrent session attended by about 35 persons.

The Council also co-hosted a workshop at the NMEA conference with the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources, the Maui Ocean Center and the Kewalo Keiki Fishing Conservancy, a non-profit group, to teach marine educators about the statewide *papio* (jack) tagging program and the value of private-public partnerships to support cooperative research and encourage public participation in the management of fishery resources. Educators participating in the workshop each tagged at least three *papio* and released them into the Maalaea boat harbor. The tagging program provides valuable fish growth and movement information that are used to manage the fishery.

The Council also sponsored three plenary speakers at NMEA: bottomfish fisherman Bobby Gomes provided a presentation on the NWHI Mau and Hoomalu limited entry fisheries; Mahina Paishon, executive director of Paepae O Heeia, discussed the restoration of the Hawaiian fishpond in Heeia (a project funded through the Community Development Project Program); and the Council's Indigenous Coordinator Charles Kaaiai gave an overview of Native Hawaiian use and management of marine resources. About 450 marine educators attended the NMEA conference.

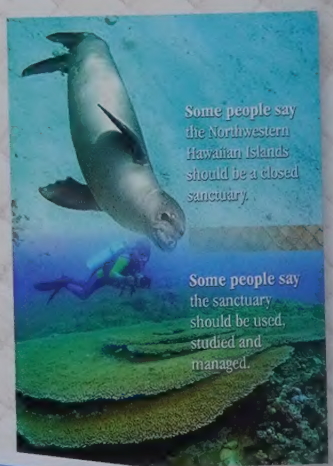
Following the conference, Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Media and Education Specialist Sylvia Spalding participated in the One Ocean Marine Forum. This group of 27 marine educators from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States met July 17 and 18 to design a network of marine, environmental and science educators for sustainable oceans. As one of the outcomes of the Forum, the Council is spearheading the organization of an international conference for marine educators in the Pacific to be held January 2007 in Suva, Fiji. For more information, contact the Council at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov.

On Aug. 27, 2005, the Council with the *Honolulu Advertiser's* Newspaper in Education program provided 23 Hawaii teachers with an in-depth look at the state's seafood industry. The workshop included a trip to the fish auction, a trip on a longline vessel to demonstrate how the gear is deployed and retrieved, a tour of a NWHI bottomfish vessel and lessons on fish preparation from D. K. Kodama (chef and owner of Sansei Seafood Restaurant & Sushi Bar).



Left: Local fisherman Bobby Gomes delivered a well-received presentation on the NWHI bottomfish fishery at the NMEA 2005 conference on Maui.

Above: Twenty-three Hawaii teachers learned firsthand about Hawaii's seafood industry from United Fishing Agency manager Brooks Takenaka at the Honolulu fish auction.


Some people say the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands should be a closed sanctuary.
Some people say the sanctuary should be used, studied and managed.

Council staff Sylvia Spalding and Mark Mitsuyasu provided teachers at the NMEA conference with educational materials on sustainable fisheries.

Above: Videos on the management and research of the NWHI fisheries were shown at the NMEA conference.

Left: Tim and Timm Timoney welcome teachers aboard the NWHI bottomfish vessel *Laysan*.

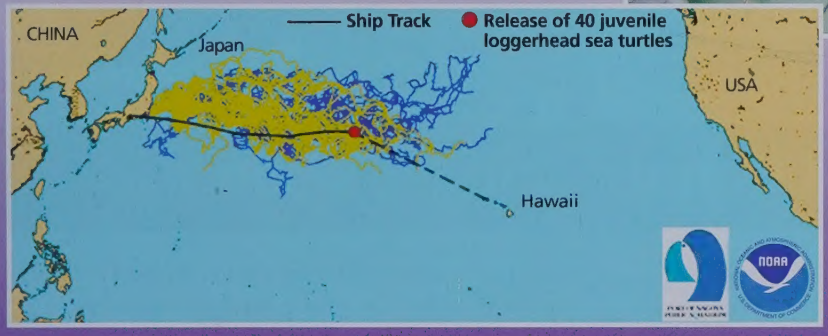
40 Loggerhead Turtles Released at North Pacific Nursery "Hot Spot"

The Japanese training vessel *Aichu Maru* docked in Honolulu on May 10, 2005, after successfully releasing 40 two-year-old juvenile loggerhead turtles each with a small satellite-linked tag. The turtles were released near the international dateline at 32 degrees North, 176 degrees East, on May 4. The area of release has been identified as a "hotspot" or pelagic nursery based on earlier satellite tracking research conducted in collaboration with the Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium. The satellite tracking of the movements and behavior of the 40 recently released turtles is expected to last from 6 to 14 months and will provide valuable information regarding pelagic habits of North Pacific loggerhead turtles.

The North Pacific loggerhead population nests exclusively in Japan and is a threatened species of concern for fishery interaction in the high seas. Loggerheads are known to span the Pacific, from Southeast Asia to Baja, California.

The loggerhead project represents the next step in several years of collaboration between Japan and NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, the Joint Institute of Marine and Atmospheric Research at the University of Hawaii and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

2003–2005 satellite tracking of loggerhead turtles released by Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium



Council Resources Available

The following outreach and education materials are available to fishermen, educators, policymakers and the general public. Requests can be sent to Sylvia Spalding at (808) 522-5341; (808) 522-8226 (fax); or info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov.

BROCHURES

- *Green Sea Turtles of the Pacific*
- *Working with the Ecuadorian fishing community to reduce the mortality of sea turtles in longline fisheries: Year one (March 2004 to March 2005)*
- *An integrated approach to reducing mortality of North Pacific loggerhead sea turtles in Baja, California Sur, Mexico*
- *Integrated management for the conservation of protected species in longline fisheries*
- *Catch Fish Not Turtles (in English, Spanish, Japanese and Mandarin)*

VIDEOS AND COMPANION PUBLICATIONS

- *The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* (12-page tabloid and 12-minute DVD on the scientific research and management of NWHI fisheries)
- *Living the Legacy: The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* (19-minute DVD on the history of the fisheries and companion leaflet)
- *FishQuest* (three-part educational series on sustainable fisheries in the US Pacific Islands on VHS or DVD with 52-page student workbook)

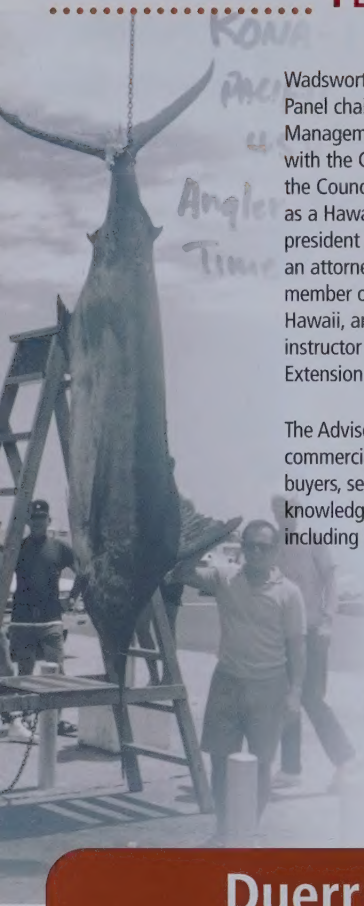
POSTERS AND COMPANION BROCHURE ON MARINE DEBRIS

- *Think Don't Throw: Why Should I Care? What Can I Do?*
- *Think Don't Throw: How Long It Takes for Garbage to Break Down*

PUBLICATIONS

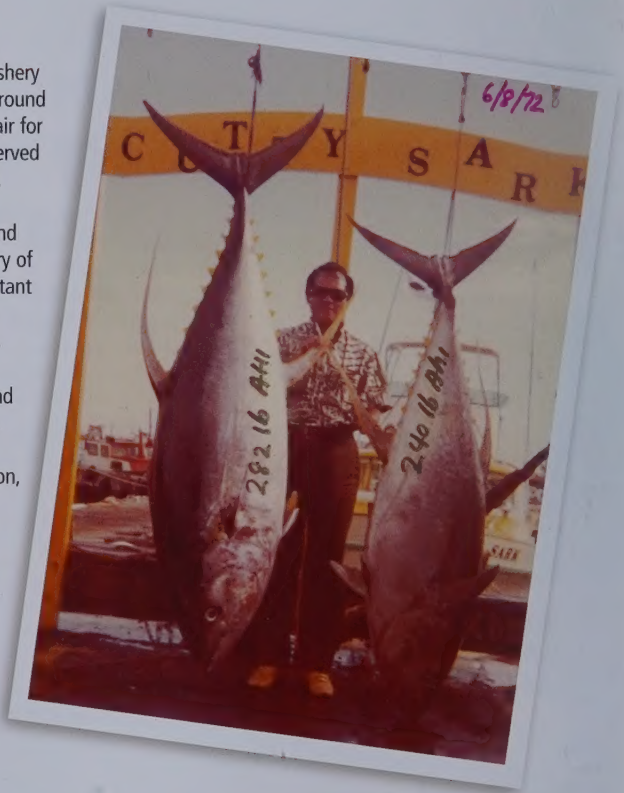
- *Proceedings of the Second International Fishers Forum, Nov. 19-22, 2002*
- *Resources Assessment Investigation of the Mariana Archipelago 1980-1985*
- *Western Pacific Sea Turtle Cooperative Research & Management Workshop, Volume 1 (May 17-21, 2004) West Pacific Leatherback and Southwest Pacific Hawksbill Sea Turtles*

Yee Heads Council's Advisory Panel



Wadsworth Yee has been appointed Advisory Panel chair for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Yee has a strong background with the Council having served as the first chair for the Council from 1976 to 1987. He has also served as a Hawaii State Senator and Representative, president of Grand Pacific Life Insurance Co., an attorney-at-law, deputy attorney general and member of the Board of Health for the Territory of Hawaii, and lecturer in business law and assistant instructor and assistant to the director of the Extension Division at the University of Hawaii.

The Advisory Panel includes 56 recreational and commercial fishermen, charter boat operators, buyers, sellers, consumers and other experts knowledgeable about the fisheries in the region, including indigenous fisheries.



Right: Wadsworth Yee with the 282-lb and 240-lb *ahi* he caught on June 8, 1972, trolling aboard his vessel the *Cutty Sark*

Left: Wadsworth Yee with a billfish caught on light tackle, a sport fishing method he helped introduce to the Hawaiian Islands.

Duerr and Gaffney Join the Council

On Aug. 11, 2005, Fred Duerr and Rick Gaffney began their terms as members of the Council, filling the positions vacated by Roy Morioka and Frank Farm. The appointments of Duerr and Gaffney as Council members at-large (i.e., representing the entire Western Pacific Region) were made by the Secretary of Commerce upon recommendation of the Governor of Hawaii. The Secretary also re-appointed Benigno M. Sablan as the Council member representing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Duerr is a self-employed resort and hotel consultant and a retired hotel executive from Kailua-Kona on Hawaii's Big Island. He has held management positions at the Kona Village Resort and the Pacific Empress Hotel, during which time he managed a number of licensed skippers and charter boats. He is currently also a member of the West Hawaii Fisheries Council and was a member of its predecessor, the West Hawaii Reef Fishing Group. He is a recreational fisherman, a member of the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and a former president and board member of the Hawaiian International Billfish Association.

Gaffney, also of Kailua-Kona, is president of Pacific Boats and Yachts, a boat dealership and yacht brokerage firm, and president of Rick Gaffney & Associates, an ocean recreation development consulting firm. His previous employment includes stints as a Sea Grant marine advisory specialist, charter sport fishing captain and an officer in the US Navy. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from Oregon State University. He is a member of Boating Writers International, International Game Fish Association, Kona Sportfishing Promotion Group, Hawaii Fishing & Boating Association, Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club and Outdoor Writers Association of America as well as co-chair of the West Hawaii Fisheries Council and the recreational fishing member of NOAA's Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council.

POLHEMUS Named Head of Hawaii Aquatic Resources Division

The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) on Aug. 26, 2005, announced that Dan A. Polhemus has been selected as the new administrator of its Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR).

Polhemus received a bachelor's degree in entomology from Colorado State University and a doctoral degree in biology from the University of Utah. Since 1983, he has conducted research on aquatic ecosystems in countries throughout the Pacific region and has received recognition for his work with native Hawaiian damselflies. He has worked at the Bishop Museum as a staff member and at the Smithsonian Institution as a consultant on an ecosystem modeling project in the Everglades, a researcher and chair of the Entomology Department.

HAWAII SEAFOOD Featured at NOAA *Fish Fry*

At the Council booth at the NOAA Fish Fry in Washington, DC, are (l-r) Council Executive Director Kitty M. Simonds, NOAA Administrator Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Commerce Department David A. Sampson and Chef D. K. Kodama, owner of Sansei Seafood Restaurant & Sushi Bar, located on Oahu and Maui.

THE 30TH ANNUAL NOAA FISH FRY took place June 8, 2005, at the Herbert C. Hoover (Main Commerce) Building in Washington, DC, to promote public understanding of aquaculture and sustainable marine fisheries. The event was held in the Commerce cafeteria, courtyards, and the National Aquarium. The menu included a wide variety of creatively prepared fresh seafood.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council participated in the event, with a booth featuring three recipes from—and prepared by—D. K. Kodama, chef and owner of Sansei Seafood Restaurant & Sushi Bar, located in Waikiki on the island of Oahu and in Kihei and Kapalua on Maui. Fish was donated by the Hawaii Longline Association and the Honolulu-based United Fishing Agency.

Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka of Hawaii.

GUAM TEAM WINS SAIPAN TOURNAMENT

The 21st Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament, originally scheduled for Aug. 27 and 28 but postponed due to a typhoon, was held Sept. 10 and 11, 2005. Ninety-five boats with more than three hundred participants departed from multiple harbors on Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to vie for over $30,000 worth in prizes. The first-place winners were angler Quang Ly and Capt. Jesus Cura from Guam, catching a 422.40-lb marlin aboard the F/V *Charlie Cat*. Last year the same vessel and team, with Capt. Hoa Van Nguyen, won the grand prize for a 519.40-lb marlin.

First-place winners (l-r) angler Quang Ly and Capt. Jesus Cura from Guam.

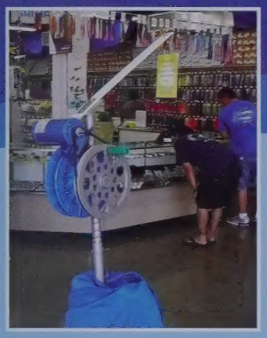
Upcoming SSC and Council Meetings to Focus on Ecosystem and Bottomfish Management

Ecosystem and bottomfish management are slated as the action items to be addressed at the 90th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and 129th Council Meetings. The SSC will convene Oct. 18-20, 2005, at the Council office in Honolulu to review and make recommendations on the items. The Council will meet Nov. 8-11, 2005, at the Hilton Guam Hotel in Tumon Bay, Guam.

For sometime now, the Council has been working to change its existing species-based fishery management plans (FMPs) to place-based fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs). The Council is expected to take final action on the draft FEPs and an accompanying draft programmatic environmental impact statement. The Council will consider the recommendations and comments from its SSC, advisory panel and plan teams as well as public comments solicited throughout the Western Pacific Region (see Council Calendar on page 12 for meeting dates and locations). Under the Council's preliminary preferred alternatives, the current FMPs for bottomfish and seamount groundfish, coral reef ecosystem, precious corals and crustaceans will be incorporated into FEPs for the Hawaii Archipelago, Mariana Archipelago, Samoa Archipelago and the Pacific Remote Island Areas. The Pelagics FMP will be converted into a Pelagics FEP.

In preparing for the shift to FEPs, the Council initiated a pilot project to identify practical community-based management approaches and strategies for the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. The project is also investigating the relevancy of information that has not traditionally been included in fishery management, such as sea level change and environmental changes evident in archaeological remains. At the November meeting, the Council will review the pilot project and may take action to incorporate its approaches in the Mariana Archipelago FEP.

The Council was recently informed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that overfishing of bottomfish around Hawaii is likely occurring. When it met in June 2005, the Council considered requiring mandatory catch reports from recreational fishermen as well as options for reducing bottomfish fishing effort and mortality in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore) surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands. Options under consideration include the closing of Penguin Bank or Middle Bank, implementing a limited entry program for bottomfishing in federal waters, or establishing bottomfish quotas. The Council directed its staff to move forward with exploring a range of management alternatives to address overfishing of bottomfish around the Hawaiian Islands.



Roger Nakasu of Hilo won this bottomfish reel in a drawing for eligible fishermen returning the completed bottomfish survey by Sept. 2, 2005.

The Council subsequently conducted public meetings throughout the State of Hawaii to garner input from fishermen on potential options that should be considered. The Council also worked with the State of Hawaii to conduct a targeted survey of the 3,700 main Hawaiian Islands bottomfish fisherman registered with the State. Eligible fishermen who returned their surveys by Sept. 2, 2005, qualified for a drawing to win a Custom Sea Gear Bottomfish Electric Reel, donated by Pacific Ocean Producers. Those returning the survey by the end of October will receive a 10 percent discount coupon at Pacific Ocean Producers. Council staff are incorporating the outcomes of these outreach efforts into the options to be discussed at the November meeting. The Council will likely take final action on this issue at its March 2006 meeting.

Other action items scheduled for the upcoming SSC and Council meetings include the following:

- **BLACK CORAL MANAGEMENT:** The Council will take final action on the measures it voted on at its 127th meeting. (See article on the 127th Council meeting on page 3 of this newsletter for details.)
- **SWORDFISH MANAGEMENT:** The Council will review methods for allocating effort in the Hawaii-based longline swordfish fishery with an aim of simplifying the distribution of effort while meeting the goals of the Pelagics FMP and relevant Biological Opinion for sea turtles impacted by the fishery. Currently, transferable certificates are issued to the Hawaii-based limited entry longline permit holders. An alternative option would be to allow access by all of the limited entry permit holders until the annual allowable sea turtle interactions have been reached, at which time the fishery would close for the year.

For more information on the upcoming meetings, contact the Council at (808) 522-8220 or info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or visit the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org.

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

ANNOUNCES

POSTER CONTEST

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is conducting a poster competition for Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) designed for students in grades K-12. The theme of the competition is "The Mariana Archipelago Ecosystem."

The contest is being conducted in conjunction with a proposal to manage fisheries in federal waters (3 to 200 miles offshore) through place-based fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs) rather than through existing fishery management plans (FMPs) that cover the entire Western Pacific Region and are species based (e.g., Bottomfish FMP, Crustacean FMP, Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP, etc.). Students are being asked to depict their idea of what the Mariana Archipelago Ecosystem means to them.

THE POSTER COMPETITION WILL BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR CATEGORIES: grades K-2, grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12. Winners of the four categories from Guam and CNMI will receive prizes.

Crayon, paint, pencil, magic marker, collage or other appropriate materials may be used for submissions, which should be 11 by 17 inches.

Competitors must put their name, age and grade category, name of their school and class, and address and contact telephone number on the back of their submission. Only one entry per person is allowed.

ENTRY DEADLINE is 5 p.m. Oct. 14, 2005. Guam students should drop their posters off at the Guam Coastal Management Office, Bureau of Statistics & Plans, Adelup. For more information about the contest on Guam, contact John Calvo at telephone/fax (671) 649-3150 or e-mail john.calvo@noaa.gov. For questions on the CNMI contest, including drop-off location(s), contact Jack Ogumoro at phone (670) 322-9830 or (670) 322-9834, fax (670) 322-2633 or e-mail jack.ogumoro@noaa.gov.

Winners will be announced and presented their prizes at the Council meeting, Nov. 9, 2005, on Guam. The winning entries will be publicized in Council publications.

COUNCIL CALENDAR 2005

OCTOBER

4 **Crustaceans Plan Team Meeting**
Council office, Honolulu

6 **128th Council Meeting**
Council office, Honolulu

13-14 **Joint Plan Team Review of Draft Fishery Ecosystem Plans**
Council office, Honolulu

17-19 **Workshop on inshore fisheries management needs**
Noumea, New Caledonia

18-20 **90th Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting**
Council office, Honolulu

22 **Council public hearing on fishery ecosystem plans**
Pago Pago, American Samoa

23-27 **1st International Congress on Marine Protected Areas**
Geelong, Australia

24-26 **New Council Members Orientation**
Washington, DC

25-27 **Council public hearings on fishery ecosystem plans and advisory panel meeting**
Saipan, Tinian and Saipan, CNMI

25-26 **Council Chairs and Executive Directors Meeting**
Washington, DC

26-27 **Hawaii Ocean Resources Management Plan Workshop**
Honolulu

31 **4th International Billfish Symposium**
Santa Catalina Island, Calif. (start)

NOVEMBER

1-3 **4th International Billfish Symposium**
Santa Catalina Island, Calif. (cont.)

1 **Council public hearing on fishery ecosystem plans**
Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu

4-7 **U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting**
Koror, Republic of Palau

8-11 **129th Council Meeting**
Hilton Guam Hotel, Tumon Bay, Guam

16-18 **Pelagic Fisheries Research Program Workshop**
Honolulu

28 **3rd International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals**
Miami, Fla. (start)

DECEMBER

1-2 **3rd International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals**
Miami, Fla. (cont.)

5-7 **Seafood and Health 05 Conference**
Washington, DC

5-16 **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Meeting**
Pohnpei, FSM

12-16 **16th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals**
San Diego, Calif.

128TH COUNCIL MEETING

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will meet by teleconference noon, October 6, 2005 (Hawaii), at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu, to consider action removing the tori line requirement for pelagic longline vessels. The Council will also consider action to require weights of 45-gram or greater when side-setting, instead of the potentially unsafe 60-gram weights. A public hearing will be held during the meeting. For more information, contact the Council at (808) 522-8220, (808) 522-8226 (fax) or www.wpcouncil.org.

Recipe Steam Fish - "The Easy Way" *By Senator Wadsworth Yee*

INGREDIENTS

Note: The amount of spices used depends on individual taste—a splash here and a dash there.

Fish, cleaned and scaled
Hawaiian salt
Ginger, sliced
Green onion, chopped
Dried turnip (chung choy), chopped
1 tsp vegetable oil
White pepper
Shoyu (soy sauce)
Chinese parsley

PREPARATION

Place fish in large bowl. If fish is too large, cut fish in half and place both halves in the bowl. Rub fish lightly with Hawaiian salt. Place ginger, green onion and dried turnip (chung choy) over fish and inside gut cavity. Sprinkle vegetable oil and a light shower of white pepper over fish.

Fill a large pot with 1½ inches of water. Place the bowl of fish in pot and cover. Boil water for 5 to 8 minutes and then simmer for 10 to 15 minutes (longer for larger fish). When reducing the heat to simmer, sprinkle some shoyu over the fish. Do not overcook as the fish will get tough. Experience will help you to judge how long you should cook your fish.

Sprinkle Chinese parsley over the fish before serving. Not only will it enhance the appearance and taste, parsley is supposed to be good for people with high blood pressure.

Pacific Islands ience Center
Honolulu Hawai 0822-2396